

Carpool Lane Popularity Lags, Despite Rise in Congestion in 2004

- Carpool lanes on Interstate 80 in Alameda and Contra Costa counties are the region’s most heavily used segments. Westbound carpool lanes occupy three of the top 10 slots — not surprising given that the westbound morning commute from State Route 4 to the Bay Bridge has consistently ranked as the region’s most congested commute. Two eastbound Interstate 80 carpool lane segments are also among the most heavily used, occupying the number seven and number nine slots.
- In seven of the 10 most heavily used carpool lane segments in 2004, peak-hour vehicle counts were down from the year-earlier period. The explanation for this decrease in carpool lane popularity is not clear, since congestion increased on many freeways in 2004, relative to 2003 levels.
- Over the five-year period from 2000 to 2004, the number of peak-hour, carpool-lane vehicles declined in six of the 10 segments listed. This is consistent with the overall

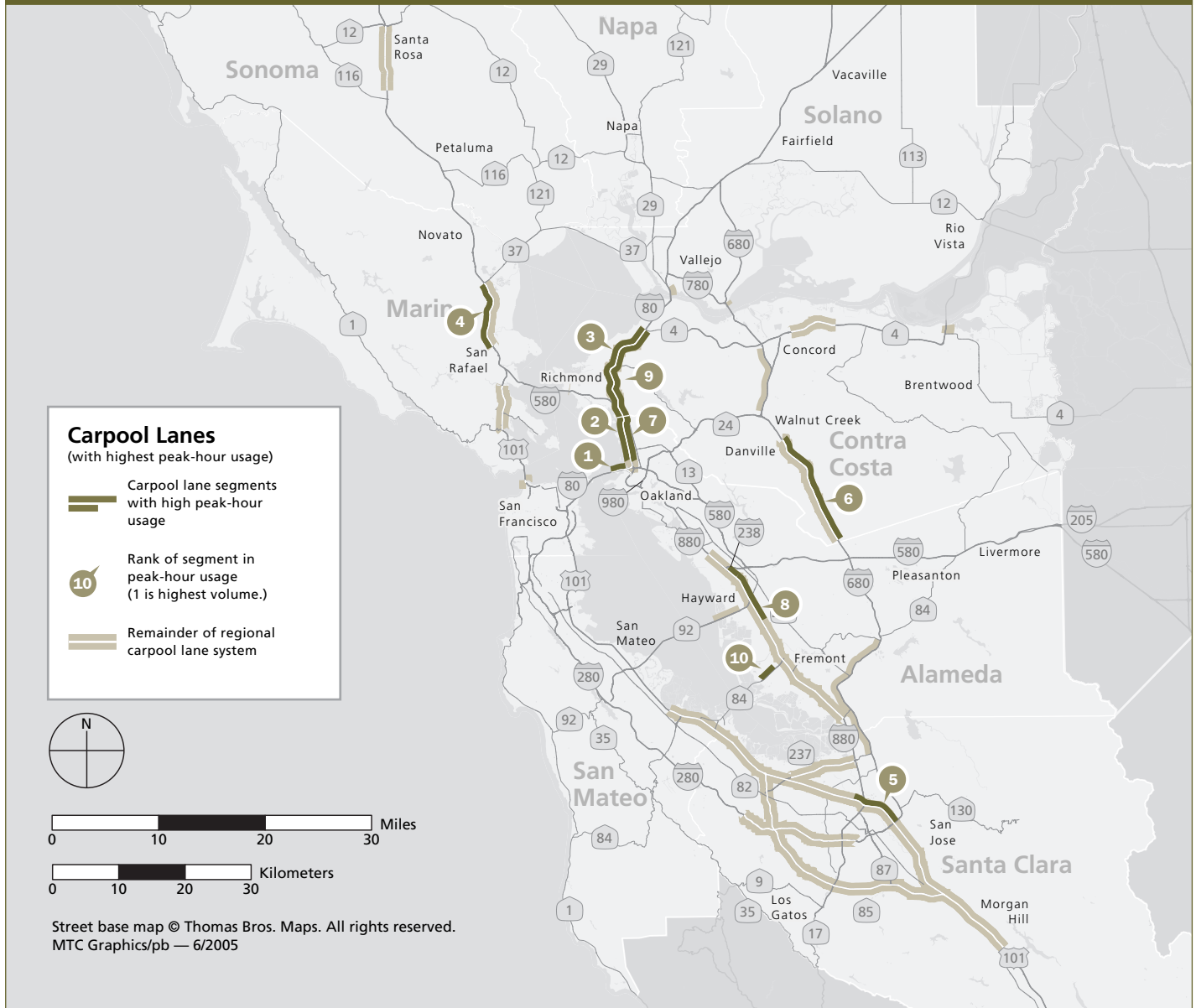
Bay Area Carpool Lanes With Highest Peak-Hour Usage, 2000–2004

Rank	Carpool Lane	Peak-Hour Carpool Vehicles ¹					Percent Change	
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2003–2004	2000–2004
1	Interstate 80, westbound, a.m. — Alameda County Bay Bridge toll plaza	3,804	3,975	3,730	3,512	3,628	+3%	–5%
2	Interstate 80, westbound, a.m. — Alameda County Contra Costa County line to Powell Street	1,113	1,555	1,698	1,512	1,481	–2%	+33%
3	Interstate 80, westbound, a.m. — Contra Costa County Route 4 to Alameda County line	1,428	1,317	1,285	1,514	1,334	–12%	–7%
4	U.S. 101, southbound, a.m. — Marin County Route 37 to North San Pedro Road	1,282	1,361	1,361	1,317	1,306	–1%	+2%
5	U.S. 101, northbound, a.m. — Santa Clara County I-280/I-680 interchange to Guadalupe Parkway	1,585	1,594	1,490	1,554	1,304	–16%	–18%
6	Interstate 680, northbound, p.m. — Contra Costa County Alcosta Boulevard to Livorna Road	1,421	1,383	1,374	1,266	1,249	–1%	–12%
7	Interstate 80, eastbound, p.m. — Alameda County Port of Oakland overcrossing to Contra Costa County line	1,217	1,080	1,070	1,295	1,224	–5%	+1%
8	Interstate 880, northbound, p.m. — Alameda County Whipple Road to south of Interstate 238 interchange	1,364	1,338	1,264	1,254	1,190	–5%	–13%
9	Interstate 80, eastbound, p.m. — Contra Costa County Alameda County line to Route 4	1,091	1,332	1,059	1,118	1,189	+6%	+9%
10	Route 84, westbound, a.m. — Alameda County Newark Boulevard to Dumbarton Bridge toll plaza	1,376	1,354	1,229	1,043	1,181	+13%	–14%

Source: Caltrans District 4

¹Includes buses, vanpools and motorcycles

Carpool Lane Peak-Hour Usage, 2004



downward trend in congestion during this period. The carpool lanes that stand out as exceptions are on Interstate 80 between Powell Street and the Contra Costa County line. Here, westbound morning carpool volumes

increased by 33 percent and eastbound evening carpool volumes increased by 9 percent. Again, this may reflect the unique levels of congestion in the I-80 corridor.